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Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions

Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document contains a summary of the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on which the secretariat is required to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session.

The Commission may wish to review the progress made and to provide the secretariat with comments and further guidance for the effective implementation of the resolutions.

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I. Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development

Resolution 71/4
Implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

1. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 71/4, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and regional and subregional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations, while recognizing the need for action in

order to generate a tangible impact on the lives of Pacific people and communities, to:

(a) Assist Pacific island members and associate members, upon request, to enhance national capacities and institutions;

(b) Enhance the Pacific voice and representation in regional and global processes;

(c) Ensure the realization of a transformational strategy for the sustainable development of small island developing States by strengthening the role of the Commission in monitoring the follow-up to the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the evolving post-2015 development agenda.

2. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 71/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to continue to enhance the voice and participation of small islands developing States in the decision-making and norm-setting processes of the Commission, including through the conference structure, while recognizing the distinct geographic and other challenges that such States face in participating in intergovernmental processes.

3. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 71/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

4. In response to paragraph 3, the secretariat, through its Subregional Office for the Pacific, continues to work with relevant agencies of the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations, and non-governmental organizations to support the early implementation of the Samoa Pathway in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. Regarding subparagraph 3 (a), ESCAP, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), is the implementing partner for the European Union-funded Pacific Climate Change and Migration Project to address in Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu national and community needs related to the relocation or movement of people as a result of climate change. A regional meeting for the Project is being convened with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to discuss project results and to agree on a work plan for further actions under the Pacific subregional architecture. While ESCAP has also worked with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Pacific Community and the Pacific Islands Forum as well as non-governmental organizations to build institutional capacities in renewable energy, climate change information use and finance, and social inclusion, its main contributions have been to (a) promote the rights of persons with disabilities through policy and legislative work carried out in the majority of the Pacific island countries and work towards a regional model law to facilitate national implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; (b) improve national planning through advisory and technical assistance at the national level (for example, the development of a national development plan for Kiribati) and link plans to budgets; implement the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting in several of the Pacific island countries, including through subregional training workshops; and conduct regional workshops for finance and/or planning officials on fiscal policies and sustainable development; (c) with regard to disaster risk management, build resilience and response capacities through regional

advisory services and assist with post-disaster needs assessments; (d) conduct a subregional workshop on the implementation of the System of Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting, two subregional workshops on the use of climate information for resilient agriculture and disaster management, and a subregional training workshop on climate finance with the Government of Fiji; and (e) conduct national projects (a social equality and protection workshop and a climate financing and private sector study and workshop) in Fiji, Kiribati (social equality and protection workshop) and Samoa (infrastructure financing study and workshop).

6. ESCAP developed a strategy for the Pacific subregion which will result in improved coordination of its various programmes of work; stronger linkages to the interests and processes of Pacific member States; and greater synergies with the rest of the United Nations. For example, ESCAP is engaged in the development of the United Nations Pacific Strategy (2018-2022) under the United Nations country teams in the Pacific and covering all of the Pacific island countries except Papua New Guinea. The United Nations Pacific Strategy outcome areas are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Samoa Pathway and the national and regional priorities of the Pacific island countries. They also include some of the Commission's priority areas, as outlined above. These efforts should provide a stronger framework for a coordinated and coherent United Nations system-wide approach to national capacity-building in the subregion, as called for in the Samoa Pathway.

7. In response to subparagraph 3 (b), the secretariat continues to enhance the Pacific voice with improved coverage of Pacific issues in its publications and by providing financial assistance for attendance at its meetings, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in Asia and the Pacific. More effort is being directed at strengthening collaboration within the subregions, with stronger pathways to the regional and global intergovernmental systems. For instance, ESCAP, at the request of the Government of Fiji and in collaboration with subregional organizations, is assisting the Pacific in its preparations for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, in June 2017. Climate change-related issues and oceans, as well as the means of implementation, will be a key consideration at the Pacific preparatory meeting, which will be held with the Commission's financial and substantive support in March 2017.

8. In response to subparagraph 3 (c), the secretariat is assisting the Pacific subregion with select global Sustainable Development Goal indicators relevant to the Pacific, which will be used to monitor and report on the Goals, the Samoa Pathway and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. An open and inclusive Pacific consultation is being held in March 2017 with the Commission's financial and substantive support to discuss and agree on regional Goal indicators for the Pacific, as well as implementation and reporting requirements. The leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum are expected to endorse them in the form of a road map on the Goals for the Pacific when they meet in September 2017. ESCAP will ensure that its subregional efforts are coordinated with its regional-level work through the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific and the forthcoming Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals outlook report. The intention is to not only strengthen the Pacific voice and participation at the regional and global levels, it is also to enable ESCAP to deliver on its mandate of following up and reviewing the progress of the implementation of the Goals and of the Samoa Pathway at both regional and subregional levels.

9. In response to paragraphs 4 and 5, the progress reported in the present document illustrates the efforts of the Executive Secretary to enable a process whereby the Pacific, as a small island developing States region and as an ESCAP subregion, is an integral part of the Commission's overall Sustainable Development Goal framework and intergovernmental process, while recognizing the distinct geographic challenges and other challenges that the Pacific member States face. Given the distance from the Pacific to the secretariat and the low representation of the Pacific subregion in the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, the Commission may wish to note the need to support the Pacific Trust Fund (now depleted) through which support is provided for the participation of the Pacific member States at Commission sessions.

II. Trade and investment

A. Resolution 70/6
Implementation of the decision of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

10. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support and facilitate the establishment and operation of an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation in accordance with the terms of reference contained in section I.B of the report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade.

11. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 70/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission annually on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution until the work of the steering group has been completed.

2. Progress made

12. In response to paragraph 2, the secretariat organized the 2nd meeting of the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-border Paperless Trade Facilitation in Bangkok from 23 to 25 March 2016. The meeting, which was attended by representatives of 31 member States, negotiated and finalized the draft text of the regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade and recommended that the Commission adopt it at its seventy-second session, in May 2016. The meeting also discussed the preparation of a draft road map for the implementation of its substantive provisions. It recommended that the Legal and Technical Working Groups of the Steering Group, which held their 3rd meeting from 21 to 23 March 2016, continue preparing a draft road map, for review at the 3rd Steering Group meeting.

13. All Working Group and Steering Group meetings were organized in conjunction with capacity-building activities to maximize the benefits for participating government officials, in particular those from least developed and landlocked developing countries. The Working Groups' 4th meeting will be held back to back with the 3rd meeting of the Steering Group, which will be held in Bangkok on 23 and 24 March 2017.

B. Resolution 72/4
Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

14. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 72/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Assist member States in the process of becoming parties to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) Collaborate effectively with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and international and subregional organizations in implementing the Agreement;

(c) Continue and further strengthen the secretariat's support for capacity-building activities related to trade facilitation and paperless trade, particularly in connection with the implementation of the Agreement, especially with regard to least developed and landlocked developing countries;

(d) Discharge effectively the functions of the secretariat of the Agreement;

(e) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

15. In response to subparagraph 4 (a), the secretariat coordinated with the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, resulting in the placement of a certified true copy in the United Nations Treaty Collection.[1] The secretariat issued official letters on 1 October 2016 to all seats of Government of ESCAP member States to inform them that the Framework Agreement was open for signature at United Nations Headquarters and to highlight the potential benefits of becoming a party. The secretariat also created a designated webpage on the Framework Agreement to facilitate access to all relevant information.[2]

16. In response to subparagraphs 4 (a) and 4 (c), the secretariat organized a capacity-building workshop on the Framework Agreement in Bangkok on 24 and 25 November 2016 to provide information on how to become a party to the Framework Agreement and to discuss its operationalization. It was attended by participants from 17 member States.

17. In response to subparagraph 4 (b), the secretariat continued to engage other relevant international organizations and to keep them informed about the Framework Agreement. In particular, informal consultations held with the secretariat of the World Trade Organization (WTO) confirmed that the Framework Agreement would provide a new tool for better implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in Asia and the Pacific. Consultations between the Oceania Customs Organization and the Subregional Office for the Pacific confirmed the readiness of the Oceania

[1] https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=X-20&chapter=10&clang=_en.

[2] www.unescap.org/resources/framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border-paperless-trade-asia-and-pacific.

Customs Organization to partner with ESCAP on the promotion and implementation of the Framework Agreement in the Pacific.

18. The secretariat will take further actions related to subparagraphs 4 (b) and 4 (d) upon entry into force of the Framework Agreement.

C. Resolution 72/12
Harnessing science, technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

19. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 72/12, the Commission requested the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation to consider the recommendations outlined in the theme study *Harnessing Science, Technology and Innovation for Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific*[3] and to present an inclusive and comprehensive set of recommendations to the Commission at its seventy-third session.

20. In paragraph 6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Raise awareness among member States on the science, technology and innovation dialogues taking place at various forums and international, regional and subregional organizations, by acting as a bridge to facilitate cooperation and joint action when necessary;

(b) Encourage, through existing mechanisms, member States to promote public, public-private and civil society partnerships, as appropriate, in order to harness science, technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

21. In paragraph 9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

22. In response to paragraph 4, the secretariat organized a session during the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation, at which the Committee considered the recommendations outlined in the theme study. The outputs of that session, together with other agenda items, were reflected in the final report of the Committee.[4]

23. In response to subparagraph 6 (a), the secretariat produced a note[5] for the Committee which provided an overview of the subregional cooperation mechanisms on science, technology and innovation in the region and organized a session at the Committee focusing on subregional knowledge-sharing on the topic.

24. In response to subparagraph 6 (b), the secretariat has engaged the public and private sectors and civil society at events that member States have both participated in and attended. For example, during the Comprehensive

[3] See E/ESCAP/72/32.

[4] E/ESCAP/CICTSTI(1)/10.

[5] E/ESCAP/CICTSTI(1)/9.

High-level Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, the secretariat held an event which convened representatives of Government and the research, business and civil society communities in the region to discuss how effective technology and innovation collaboration and cooperation between those sectors could be achieved to support the least developed countries to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. In response to paragraph 9, the report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation will be submitted to the Commission at its seventy-third session.

III. Transport

A. Resolution 68/4
Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

26. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 68/4, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016) and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport;

(b) Carry out, in 2016, an evaluation of the implementation of phase II of the Regional Action Programme and to submit a report with recommendations to the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session;

(c) Report to the Commission at its seventy-first and seventy-third sessions on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

27. In response to subparagraph 2 (a), the Ministerial Conference on Transport, at its third session, which was held in Moscow in December 2016, reviewed and deliberated on emerging issues in transport, which led to the creation of recommendations on policy actions and initiatives to enhance regional transport cooperation and connectivity for sustainable development. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), and a number of model agreements aimed at facilitating international road transport and logistics in the region.

28. With regard to transport infrastructure, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports entered into force on 23 April 2016. To date, 17 member States have signed the Agreement and 11 have become parties to it. For the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, the total numbers of parties are 29 and 18, respectively. The stakeholders working on dry ports and the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway

networks aim to promote activities encompassing road, rail and port infrastructure as well as logistics services as a way to advance the development agenda of the region and make progress towards the realization of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region.

29. With regard to inter-island shipping and connecting subregional transport networks, in July 2016, a workshop was organized and co-hosted by the Pacific Community, the International Maritime Organization, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Subregional Office for the Pacific in Fiji, at which participants agreed to consider measures to facilitate maritime transport. Meanwhile, in September and December 2016, the secretariat, in collaboration with the Korea Maritime Institute, organized two meetings to address maritime safety at the regional level. Finally, in December 2016, the secretariat held a meeting on port infrastructure and the consideration of a new approach to port interfaces between ships and land transport modes to provide access to new markets for archipelagic and Pacific island countries.

30. With regard to transport facilitation, the secretariat has undertaken numerous initiatives to implement activities under the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport and provided technical assistance for the negotiations on the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network. The Governments of China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation signed the Agreement at a special event held during the Ministerial Conference on Transport.

31. Under the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, the secretariat developed four complementary models to support countries in negotiating and implementing transport facilitation agreements. Workshops on options to address facilitation challenges were held in Azerbaijan, Bhutan, India, Mongolia, Myanmar and Viet Nam. In addition, a series of policy dialogues held in South and South-West Asia during the period 2013-2015 resulted in a strong commitment among member countries concerned to develop a connectivity master plan for that subregion.

32. In addition, the secretariat, with ADB, finalized a feasibility study on the pilot implementation of the Secure Cross Border Transport Model along the Bhutan-India transit corridor. The secretariat continued to assist Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal in implementing their Motor Vehicles Agreement.

33. With regard to transport logistics, the secretariat carried out a study and published a resulting report entitled, "Regional study: the use of logistics information systems for increased efficiency and effectiveness", which included a review of the technical aspects of existing national and transnational logistics information systems, best practices, an outline of recommended data standards and other technical recommendations, including the Standard Model of Logistics Information Systems.

34. The secretariat also organized the annual Regional Conference for Logistics Service Providers as a platform for freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers to share knowledge and best practices relevant to the transport and logistics sector and to discuss emerging issues, challenges and potential solutions.

35. With regard to participation of the finance and private sectors, the secretariat provided assistance to the Governments of Bhutan, Cambodia and

Myanmar for their recent launch of the online Public-Private Partnership Portals which act as official gateways for information on public-private partnerships in those countries and help to increase awareness and understanding of public-private partnerships and to attract further private sector investment.

36. With regard to sustainable transport, road safety, transport and the Millennium Development Goals, the secretariat held a series of national, subregional and regional meetings and workshops to strengthen the capacity of transport officials to implement policies. The secretariat collaborated with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development to plan sessions of the Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum. A project on strengthening the capacity of officials of countries with special needs to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was also implemented. The eighty-fourth issue of the "Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific" (2014) contains five papers on the state of transport services, their contribution to improving health and education, and their impact on communities. The eighty-fifth issue of the Bulletin (2015) covered sustainable and inclusive urban transport, while the eighty-sixth issue (2016) covered sustainable rural access.

37. In response to subparagraph 2 (b), an independent evaluation of phase II (2012-2016) of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific reviewed its implementation and provided recommendations for the contents and structure of the new Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021). The Regional Action Programme, phase I, was adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport in December 2016.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

38. The Commission is invited to consider for endorsement the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), which includes a number of activities aimed at enhancing regional connectivity, as well as the response to the 2030 Agenda.

B. Resolution 70/7
Implementation of the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

39. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Accord priority to the implementation of the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific;

(b) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third and seventy-fifth sessions on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

40. The resolution was adopted to address the inherent transport connectivity barriers that currently exist in archipelagic and island developing countries.

In that regard, the secretariat implemented a series of activities in key areas related to the improvement of maritime transport and related services.

41. In July 2016, a workshop was co-hosted by the Pacific Community, the International Maritime Organization, ADB, and the Subregional Office for the Pacific in Fiji, at which participants agreed to consider using automation and/or the single window systems already in place in some countries to advance the development of a maritime single window concept for ship and cargo clearance. Countries further agreed to explore the possibility of harmonizing ship, cargo, crew and passenger clearance documents, processes and systems in the Pacific region, and in that regard requested regional organizations and international partners to facilitate the necessary assistance, as well as consultations among regional stakeholders.

42. The workshop was followed by an expert group meeting on improving maritime connectivity, at which countries acknowledged that the work accomplished by ESCAP in developing the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks would support the future development of regional connectivity, including to and from Pacific island countries. In that regard, they noted that the introduction of regional cabotage could lead to enhanced maritime services and result in efficiency gains in the local shipping sector. They also noted that the idea deserved further consideration and requested the secretariat to take a lead in that area through the dissemination of successful experiences and best practices.

43. Recognizing that the continued expansion of international sea-borne trade means larger vessels in larger numbers, policymakers of the region agreed on assessing policies related to maritime safety which traditionally touches upon many issues across a wide spectrum of technical areas, such as the design, operation and maintenance of vessels and port infrastructure, the definition of and compliance with policies and regulations, law enforcement, recruitment and training of officers and crew, organization and management of rescue services, risk assessment, and safety audits. Given that accidents at sea usually result in loss of life and destruction of maritime ecosystems, it is becoming necessary to take measures to reduce their occurrence through a harmonized and holistic approach to the above issues. ESCAP, in collaboration with the Korea Maritime Institute, held two related meetings in Bangkok in September and December 2016 to map a way forward. A report is being finalized and will be released shortly.

44. Finally, recognizing that a truly integrated regional transport system requires a new conceptual approach in the design of ports to reinforce their role as gateways to hinterland areas, ESCAP held a meeting on port infrastructure in Bangkok in December 2016. The meeting recognized the need to rethink port interfaces between ships and land transport modes to provide access to new markets for archipelagic and Pacific island countries.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

45. The Commission is invited to endorse the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), which were adopted at the Ministerial Conference on Transport in Moscow in December 2016. The Regional Action Programme includes a number of activities aimed at improving connectivity for landlocked developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States.

C. Resolution 70/8
Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

46. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Assist members and associate members in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration, in collaboration with other United Nations and specialized multilateral agencies, relevant subregional organizations, international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and the private sector;

(b) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

47. In response to subparagraph 2 (a), the secretariat continued to accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), in accordance with the request in the Ministerial Declaration.

48. To promote policy guidance at the ministerial level, the Ministerial Conference on Transport, at its third session, which was held in Moscow in December 2016, reviewed and deliberated on emerging issues in transport, which subsequently led to the creation of recommendations on policy actions and initiatives to enhance regional transport cooperation and connectivity for sustainable development. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), and a number of model agreements aimed at facilitating international road transport and logistics in the region.

49. With regard to transport infrastructure, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports entered into force on 23 April 2016. To date, 17 member States have signed the Agreement and 11 have become parties to it. For the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, the total numbers of parties are 29 and 18, respectively. The stakeholders working on dry ports and the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks aim to promote activities encompassing road, rail and port infrastructure as well as logistics services as a way to advance the development agenda of the region and make progress towards the realization of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region.

50. With regard to inter-island shipping and connecting subregional transport networks, in July 2016, a workshop was organized and co-hosted by the Pacific Community, the International Maritime Organization, ADB and the Subregional Office for the Pacific in Fiji, at which participants agreed to consider measures to facilitate maritime transport. Meanwhile, in September and December 2016, the secretariat, in collaboration with the Korea Maritime Institute, organized two meetings to address maritime safety at the regional level. Finally, in December 2016, the secretariat held a meeting on port

infrastructure in order to consider a new approach to port interfaces between ships and land transport modes to provide access to new markets for archipelagic and Pacific island countries.

51. With regard to transport facilitation, the secretariat has undertaken numerous initiatives to implement activities under the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport and provided technical assistance for the negotiations on the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network. The Governments of China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation signed the Agreement at a special event held during the Ministerial Conference on Transport.

52. The secretariat developed four mutually complementary models under the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport to support countries in the implementation of transport facilitation agreements. Workshops on options to address facilitation challenges were held in Azerbaijan, Bhutan, India, Mongolia, Myanmar and Viet Nam. In addition, a series of policy dialogues held in South and South-West Asia during the period 2013-2015 resulted in a strong commitment among member countries concerned to develop a connectivity master plan for that subregion.

53. In addition, the secretariat, with ADB, finalized a feasibility study on the pilot implementation of the Secure Cross Border Transport Model along the Bhutan-India transit corridor. The secretariat continued to assist Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal in implementing their Motor Vehicles Agreement.

54. With regard to transport logistics, the secretariat carried out a study and published a resulting report entitled, "Regional study: the use of logistics information systems for increased efficiency and effectiveness", which included a review of the technical aspects of existing national and transnational logistics information systems, best practices, an outline of recommended data standards and other technical recommendations, including the Standard Model of Logistics Information Systems.

55. The secretariat also organized the annual Regional Conference for Logistics Service Providers as a platform for freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers to share knowledge and best practices relevant to the transport and logistics sector and to discuss emerging issues, challenges and potential solutions.

56. With regard to participation of the finance and private sectors, the secretariat provided assistance to the Governments of Bhutan, Cambodia and Myanmar for their recent launch of the online Public-Private Partnership Portals which act as official gateways for information on public-private partnerships in those countries and help to increase awareness and understanding of public-private partnerships, which will have economic and social benefits.

57. With regard to sustainable transport, road safety, transport and the Millennium Development Goals, the secretariat held a series of national, subregional and regional meetings and workshops to strengthen the capacity of transport officials to implement policies. The secretariat collaborated with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development to plan sessions of the Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum. A project on strengthening the capacity of officials of countries with special needs to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was also implemented.

The eighty-fourth issue of the "Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific" (2014) contains five papers on the state of transport services, their contribution to improving health and education, and their impact on communities. The eighty-fifth issue of the Bulletin (2015) covered sustainable and inclusive urban transport, while the eighty-sixth issue (2016) covered sustainable rural access.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

58. The Commission is invited to consider for endorsement the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), which includes a number of activities aimed at enhancing regional connectivity, as well as the response to the 2030 Agenda.

D. Resolution 71/7
Adoption of the Regional Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

59. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 71/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Cooperation Framework for Facilitation of International Railway Transport by assisting members and associate members in their efforts to realize the vision of a sustainable integrated intermodal transport and logistics system;

(b) Ensure effective coordina..on with other United Nations and multilateral agencies, as well as with subregional organizations, in the implementation of the Regional Cooperation Framework;

(c) Ensure the secretariat's cooperation with the relevant regional initiatives aimed at developing transport connectivity, inter alia, the Joint Project on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Partnership for Quality Infrastructure, as well as other regional corridors, with a view to contributing to the ongoing programmes of the secretariat on transport and prioritizing transport connectivity in the development agenda;

(d) Facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices on the facilitation of international railway transport, including monitoring progress made in implementing the Regional Cooperation Framework;

(e) Urge member States that have not already done so to become parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network;

(f) Collaborate effectively with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and private sector investors and international organizations to mobilize further financial and technical support for the wider development and facilitation of railway transport along the Trans-Asian Railway Network.

60. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 71/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the progress made in implementing the resolution.

2. Progress made

61. In response to subparagraphs 2 (a), 2 (c) and 2 (d), the secretariat has launched numerous initiatives to implement activities under the Regional Cooperation Framework. To enhance the understanding of the stakeholders on key issues related to the facilitation of international railway transport, as contained in the Framework and to promote the sharing of experiences, the secretariat partnered with the International Union of Railways to hold a joint seminar on facilitation and costing of railway services along the Trans-Asian Railway in Bangkok in December 2015.

62. The secretariat also presented on the Regional Cooperation Framework at the following events:

(a) 8th Interdepartmental Meeting of the Organisation for Co-operation between Railways on practice in border crossing for international railway transport, held in Gdansk, Poland, in September 2015;

(b) Policy dialogue on strengthening transport connectivity in Southern and Central Asia, held in Tehran in December 2015;

(c) 2nd meeting of the Railway Working Group of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, held in Bangkok in April 2016.

63. In response to subparagraph 2 (b), the secretariat has strengthened partnerships with key railway organizations that work on international railway transport, namely the Organisation for Co-operation between Railways, the International Union of Railways and the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail, in order to bring their expertise and practical experience in strengthening international railway transport to member States.

64. In response to subparagraph 2 (e), two treaty events provided member States with an opportunity to become parties to the three intergovernmental transport agreements developed by ESCAP, including the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network. The first was held during the Global Conference on Sustainable Transport in Ashgabat in November 2016, and the second was held during the Ministerial Conference on Transport in Moscow in December 2016.

65. In response to subparagraph 2 (f), since June 2016, with funding support from the Government of the Russian Federation, the secretariat has been implementing a project on the harmonization of rules and regulations for the facilitation of international railway transport. As part of the project, a manual on good practices at railway border crossings is being developed, as is a proposal to establish common minimum standards on technical and operational parameters for international railway transport in the region. On their completion, a regional meeting will be held to endorse the respective recommendations. The project outputs will directly address two fundamental issues identified in the Regional Cooperation Framework, namely identifying possible options on and/or solutions for (a) standards for railway infrastructure, facilities and equipment and (b) the coordination of regulatory controls and inspections at border interchange stations.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

66. The Commission may wish to review the progress made in the implementation of the resolution and to provide further guidance for its effective implementation so as to make a tangible impact in strengthening

railway transport in the region. The Commission is invited to endorse the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), which were adopted at the Ministerial Conference on Transport.

E. Resolution 71/8
Strengthening intraregional and interregional connectivity in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

67. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 71/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Accord priority to developing comprehensive and seamless connectivity in the region, with a focus on the development of maritime, rail, road, air and intermodal/multimodal transport and to provide the necessary support for the harmonization of laws, regulations, standards and documents relating to regional connectivity;

(b) Enhance efforts to assist members and associate members in their need for infrastructure financing with a view to strengthening connectivity, inter alia, through coordinating with the existing and new multilateral development banks on financing options and opportunities;

(c) Actively participate in cooperation among members and associate members for the effective implementation of relevant initiatives, including the Silk Road Economic Belt, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the Global Infrastructure Initiative, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025 and the Master Plan on Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Connectivity, including by providing intellectual support, policy advice and capacity-building assistance;

(d) Consult with members and associate members, as well as other relevant organizations, in order to establish an institutional mechanism to support interregional transport connectivity between Asia and Europe, with the aim of introducing appropriate recommendations into the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), which was to be submitted to the Ministerial Conference on Transport in 2016;

(e) Build or strengthen partnerships between ESCAP and other relevant regional and subregional institutions and cooperation mechanisms in order to promote interregional and intraregional connectivity.

68. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 71/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

69. The Regional Action Programme has continued to provide a framework for promoting cooperation and integration in transport for inclusive and sustainable development in the region, and its implementation served as a basis for the secretariat's programme of work for the period 2016-2017.

70. In response to subparagraph 6 (a), the secretariat organized the 6th meeting of the Working Group on the Asian Highway, the 4th meeting of

the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and the 1st meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports.

71. The critical role of dry ports in promoting connectivity was recognized by member States, and the secretariat provided guidance through the dissemination of information obtained during fact-finding missions to five countries of the region, namely Australia, China, India, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, which were considered to have achieved some measure of success in the establishment and operation of dry ports. It was expected that the experience of those countries could be used to assist other countries of the region in applying best practice planning techniques and policy formulation to the development of dry ports.

72. In December 2016, the Ministerial Conference on Transport adopted the Model Subregional Agreement on Transport Facilitation, the Model Bilateral Agreement on International Road Transport, the Model Multilateral Permit for International Road Transport and the Standard Model of Logistics Information Systems. The four transport facilitation models, if implemented, will lead to enhanced harmonization of transport laws, regulations, standards and documents. Consequently, regional transport operational connectivity will also be improved.

73. A new project, on comprehensive planning of Eurasian transport corridors to strengthen intra- and interregional transport connectivity, funded by the Government of China to identify transport corridors connecting Asia and Europe, is ongoing. Currently information on infrastructure status is being collected and the operationalization and transport facilitation measures of the corridors are being reviewed. Existing related institutional mechanisms and legal instruments for cross-border transport operation along the corridors are also being reviewed. The secretariat identified potential transport corridors that, once operationalized, would significantly contribute to enhancing intra- and interregional transport connectivity. As part of its efforts to formulate and implement transport facilitation measures, the secretariat organized the 4th consultation meeting among China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation on a draft intergovernmental agreement on international road transport along the Asian Highway network in Moscow from 29 March to 1 April 2016 to finalize the agreement and its annexes and to discuss the arrangements for a truck test-run along Asian Highway 3 from Tianjin, China, via Ulaanbaatar to Ulan-Ude, Russian Federation. The test run was successfully conducted in August 2016. The Agreement was signed by the three countries in Moscow during the Ministerial Conference on Transport.

74. In response to subparagraph 6 (b), the secretariat provided assistance to the Governments of Bhutan, Cambodia and Myanmar for their recent launch of the online Public-Private Partnership Portals which act as official gateways for information on public-private partnerships in those countries and help to increase awareness and understanding of public-private partnerships and attract further private sector investment, which will have economic and social benefits. The online portals are designed to act as a primary communication resource through which Governments can promote and highlight news of projects and events on public-private partnerships.

75. In response to subparagraph 6 (c), the secretariat continued to pursue different options to advance the connectivity agenda at the regional, subregional and national levels. At the regional level, in addition to organizing the meetings of the Working Groups mentioned above, the secretariat participated in a symposium on connecting the connectivities, which was organized by the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council in

Yangzhou, China, in September 2016. At the subregional level, the secretariat also highlighted the needs and benefits of connectivity at the 17th and 18th meetings of the Special Working Group on the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link Project held by the ASEAN secretariat in Indonesia in August 2015 and Viet Nam in July 2016, respectively. At the national level, at the request of the Government of Indonesia, the secretariat conducted a seminar on integrated intermodal transport connectivity in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on 8 and 9 September 2015 to enhance the capacities of senior policymakers and/or transport planners to develop future transport policies that are aligned with the connectivity agenda of the 2030 Agenda.

76. The secretariats of ASEAN and ESCAP held a joint capacity-building workshop on developing integrated intermodal transport systems in Bangkok on 28 and 29 November 2016, which was attended by representatives of the public and private sectors of nine ASEAN member States. At the workshop, the importance of integrated intermodal transport systems as a key enabler for sustainable transport for sustainable development outcomes was emphasized. The secretariat was requested to continue to provide assistance on strengthening legal frameworks; building the capacity of transport and border officials for the implementation of transport facilitation agreements, sharing information and experiences; and strengthening inter-agency coordination. The secretariat, with the support of the Korea Maritime Institute and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, held seminars on improving maritime transport safety and the development of port infrastructure in Bangkok in December 2016.

77. The secretariat is currently preparing background documents for the policy seminar which will be held early in 2017 in cooperation with the Government of China to promote the Belt and Road Initiative and sustainable development.

78. In response to subparagraph 6 (d), the secretariat's initiative on creating an interregional coordination committee on transport between Asia and Europe to foster seamless sustainable transport connectivity was supported by the Ministerial Conference on Transport in 2016. Supporting activities have been included in the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), as one of its seven components.

79. In response to subparagraph 6 (e), in July 2016, the secretariat organized an expert group meeting on improving maritime connectivity for Pacific island countries, at which countries acknowledged that the work accomplished by ESCAP in developing the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks would support the future development of regional connectivity, including to and from Pacific island countries. Paragraph 75 details examples of cooperation with ASEAN on this topic. In cooperation with the World Bank, the secretariat held a workshop on legal instruments for subregional connectivity in Bangkok in May 2016. In cooperation with ADB, the secretariat provided support for and organized joint activities on transport facilitation, railway development and road safety in South Asia. The secretariat, in cooperation with the International Union of Railways, held a seminar on facilitation and costing of railway services along the Trans-Asian Railway in Bangkok in December 2015.

80. Finally, recognizing that a truly integrated regional transport system requires a new conceptual approach in the design of ports to reinforce their role as gateways to hinterland areas, ESCAP held a meeting on port infrastructure in Bangkok in December 2016. The meeting recognized the

need to rethink port interfaces between ships and land transport modes to provide access to new markets for archipelagic and Pacific island countries.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

81. The Commission is invited to provide guidance to the secretariat on further activities to implement the resolution. As its full implementation requires a large amount of extrabudgetary funding, the Commission may wish to urge donors to either establish a special fund or to increase financial support dedicated to the development of intraregional and interregional connectivity.

IV. Environment and development

A. Resolution 71/9
Strengthening cooperation on sustainable management of water resources in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

82. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 71/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Use existing regional platforms for the dissemination of knowledge and exchange of experiences, including those on the use of new financing mechanisms and good practices in intergovernmental cooperation on sustainable management of water resources;

(b) Continue consultations with members and associate members, upon their request, and in coordination with relevant international organizations, including multilateral financial institutions, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations, and relevant programmes and bilateral arrangements, on the development and implementation of projects supporting regional cooperation on sustainable management of transboundary water resources within their respective mandates;

(c) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

83. In response to subparagraph 2 (a), the secretariat developed the Policy Guidance Manual on Wastewater Management with a Special Emphasis on Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems[6] in 2015 in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Asian-Institute of Technology. The publication was launched at the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in October 2015. An interactive e-learning course was developed based on the Policy Guidance Manual,[7] and facilitated knowledge-sharing and e-learning sessions were held during the Pavilion of Partnerships during the second and third Asia-Pacific Forums on Sustainable Development in May 2015 and April 2016, respectively, as well as during the fourth session of the Committee on Environment and Development, which was held in November 2015.

[6] ST/ESCAP/2729.

[7] https://sustdev.unescap.org/course/category/1.

84. Additionally, to facilitate knowledge-sharing and the exchange of experiences and to identify opportunities for regional cooperation to support member States with the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 and its targets in synergy with the other Goals, while underscoring the untapped opportunities in integrated water resources management, water efficiency, and waste water management, treatment and reuse, the secretariat held an event on water and sanitation at the core of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals during the Third Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

85. The secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and ILO, wrote the chapter on regional perspectives of the *United Nations World Water Development Report 2016* on the theme "Water and jobs", which explored the important relationship between decent work and water, how greater access to clean and affordable water supports health, livelihoods and the economy, and how meeting water needs can create employment. The *Report* was launched on World Water Day on 22 March 2016 by the secretariat with UNESCO and ILO. An interactive dialogue session explored the importance of generating sustainable employment and green growth in the Asia-Pacific region in the water and sanitation sector.

86. To support the capacity development of policymakers, the secretariat issued two working papers, "Analytical framework for integration of water and sanitation Sustainable Development Goals and targets using systems thinking approach" and "Water markets in Asia and the Pacific: an overview of trends, opportunities, risks and policies" to be posted on the Asia-Pacific Knowledge Platform for Sustainable Development as additional knowledge products.

87. In response to subparagraph 2 (b), the secretariat attended the 18th and 19th Governing Council meetings of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, which were held in January and July 2016, respectively. At the meetings, the preparations for the third Asia-Pacific Water Summit and regional preparations for the Eighth World Water Forum were discussed. The secretariat made a presentation at the Singapore International Water Week, which was held in conjunction with the fifth World Cities Summit and the third Clean Enviro Summit.

88. In addition, the secretariat attended the High-level Symposium on Sustainable Development Goal 6 and Targets on the theme "Ensuring that No One is Left Behind in Access to Water and Sanitation", which was held in Dushanbe from 9 to 11 August 2016, and gave a presentation on the integration of water and sanitation Sustainable Development Goals and targets using a systems thinking approach in Asia and the Pacific at a session on new and innovative water cooperation mechanisms for sustainable development. Following that, the secretariat organized a consultation with water experts from Central Asian member States to further discuss opportunities for the application of integrated approaches at the subregional level and through existing subregional cooperation mechanisms.

89. In addition, the secretariat, as one of the founding members of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, has supported the work of the Global Water Partnership with posters with slogans such as "Shifting towards water-resilient sustainable cities", "Qualitative and quantitative accountability: local Sustainable Development Goal 6-readiness" and "Ensure cross-sectoral water and sanitation services for all through integrated approaches" at the PAN ASIA workshop on innovative urban water management in Asia, at the

Singapore Water Week in July 2016 and at the Korean International Water Week in Daegu, Republic of Korea, in October 2016.

90. Additionally, the secretariat organized a parallel session 8 on integrated water solutions at the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in Jakarta in October 2015. Participants reviewed integrated urban solutions for sustainable cities and identified a number of policy areas for the attention of policymakers and practitioners at the frontiers of policy. Based on those recommendations, the Chair of the Forum called for actions to adopt a systems-thinking framework on integrated urban water management for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6. The Chair also called for the promotion of inclusive policies, regulations and financing mechanisms to support centralized and decentralized management approaches, for the diffusion of diverse technologies, support for water and sanitation markets, and community participation.

91. The secretariat also held the second regional policy workshop on wastewater management and sanitation in South-East Asia in Bangkok in April 2015 to share knowledge and best practices from the implementation of the project "Strengthening the capacity of policymakers in South-East Asia to promote policies and develop plans for improved wastewater treatment and reuse in urban and peri-urban areas" with water and sanitation policymakers and experts from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. Participants reviewed strategies on and policy tools for wastewater treatment and sanitation for scaling up good practices and enabling financing mechanisms. Participants agreed that there should be a strong political will and commitment and leadership from Governments to make progress on the wastewater management and sanitation issues at the central and local government levels.

92. In partnership with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, the secretariat held the UN-Water Regional Expert Consultation on Water Security in the Asia-Pacific Region in Bangkok in November 2015. Participants called for an integrated and holistic research agenda in the context of water security and strengthening transboundary cooperation, which is essential to delivering on water mandates, and urged the secretariat to conduct an analysis of the integration of the water-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, while taking into account the five dimensions of water security.

93. To strengthen the capacity of regional policymakers at the city and/or municipal level to develop and implement policies for water-resilient and sustainable cities and efficient urban water management services, with a particular emphasis on least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, the secretariat launched a project on moving towards water-resilient and sustainable cities and the development of efficient urban water management strategies in Asia and the Pacific. [8] The project focused on developing policy tools, identifying transferrable good practices and enhancing access to intergovernmental cooperation platforms. An e-learning module on policy tools for efficient urban water services and resilient urban water infrastructure, including financial mechanisms, was developed. The e-learning module was launched

[8] The project contributed to the implementation of resolution 70/12 on strengthening efforts on human settlements and sustainable urban development for the Asia-Pacific region and complemented the work on resolution 69/8 on enhancing knowledge-sharing and cooperation in integrated water resources management in Asia and the Pacific.

on the Commission's Asia-Pacific Knowledge Platform for Sustainable Development in the second quarter of 2016 in order to reach a wider range of policymakers in the region and beyond.

94. To further support the capacity development of policymakers on sustainable water resources management, the secretariat developed and implemented two additional projects, one on leveraging action on water security for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific in 2015 and the second on the application of a framework for an integrated systems thinking approach for the implementation of the water-related Goals and targets in selected Asia-Pacific countries in 2016. These projects led to several outcomes, including the establishment of an expert advisory group, comprising renowned regional and international water experts, to support the secretariat with a review of the knowledge products and project activities.

95. The secretariat also held a regional seminar on integrated approaches for Sustainable Development Goal planning and Goal 6 on water and sanitation in Bangkok in November 2016, during the ESCAP SDG Week, in order to raise awareness, increase understanding and share experiences and lessons learned from the application of the analytical framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets on the integration of water and sanitation using a systems thinking approach. Sri Lanka and Tajikistan shared their experiences and lessons learned, while Fiji highlighted the implementation strategy for the Goals which was integrated into the country's green growth strategy and spoke about the opportunity to use the Framework. The seminar provided opportunities for learning about various methodologies for integrating the Goals, including the analytical framework, as well as for hands-on applied modelling using systems thinking tools. The participants at the seminar recommended that ESCAP should continue playing the role of a regional broker and a global-regional bridge for progressive concepts, ideas and tools, such as the analytical framework using systems thinking. ESCAP should continue serving as a provider of capacity development support with a portfolio of tools and mechanisms and as a coordinator for regional learning alliances, regional partnerships and investments for the implementation of the Goals. Two training sessions specifically tailored for the needs of national expert teams from Fiji and Tajikistan were held after the seminar to assist with redefining the national causal-loop model for Tajikistan and to develop a national causal-loop model integrating the goals of the national sustainable development strategy with the green growth targets for Fiji.

B. Resolution 72/6
Committing to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

96. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 72/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and provide annual updates and recommendations to member States, including through the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development;

(b) Support the process to define a regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda and to address challenges to its achievement

in Asia and the Pacific, pursuant to recommendations of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, as contained in its report;

(c) Strengthen support to member States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda in an integrated approach, inter alia, with analytical products, technical services and capacity-building initiatives through knowledge-sharing products and platforms, and to enhance data and statistical capacities;

(d) Continue to provide capacity-building opportunities to member States, leveraging existing expertise and its intergovernmental forum to contribute to the strengthening of their capacity, including through support for mainstreaming financing for development issues in areas such as domestic resource mobilization, as well as through support for their efforts in developing integrated approaches, models and tools in enhancing their regional cooperation on the Sustainable Development Goals with a special emphasis on the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

97. In paragraph 9 of its resolution 72/6, the Commission called upon the Executive Secretary, as convener of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, to strengthen and promote communication, cooperation and collaboration among the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system in Asia and the Pacific and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by member States, in particular least developed, landlocked developing and Pacific island developing countries.

98. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 72/6, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

99. The secretariat has based its support for the implementation of this resolution on its previous work in the area of sustainable development, starting from the regional preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and continuing up to, and beyond the development of the 2030 Agenda.

100. As part of this response, the secretariat is seeking to strengthen communication and coordination with member States. Better coordination has been achieved through close consultation with the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, through national ESCAP coordination focal points, designated by countries at the secretariat's request, and through a dedicated space for activities on the 2030 Agenda on the ESCAP website.[9]

101. In response to subparagraph 7 (a), member States were consulted on the organization of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. This approach promotes the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development through the agenda and participation of the Forum and is a reflection of the format and organization of the high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council and the secretariat's role as outlined by the resolution.

[9] www.unescap.org/2030-agenda.

102. In response to subparagraph 7 (b), the secretariat will present to the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in March 2017 a final draft of a proposal for a road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda. The process of developing the draft involved consultation through the Advisory Committee, the circulation of successive drafts to Governments, civil society and members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, and consultations with the Advisory Committee in an informal session.

103. In response to subparagraph 7 (c), the secretariat has contributed to national implementation efforts with analytical products, technical services provided to subregional institutions and programmes, and capacity-building in various areas, in particular in relation to strengthening follow-up and review and through knowledge platforms and products.

(a) Analytical products

104. The secretariat prepared analyses of key policy priorities and implementation challenges for the accelerated achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Central Asia, South-East Asia, South and South-West Asia, and the Pacific that also looked at the interrelationships between Goals and targets. These analyses have been used for policy advocacy and knowledge-sharing activities in the subregions.

105. The analytical work also provided direct support for national implementation efforts. Systems analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals, in relation to Goal 6, supported an integrated approach to implementation planning for the Goals in Sri Lanka. The results were shared and discussed at a regional seminar on integrated approaches for Sustainable Development Goal planning and Goal 6 in Bangkok in November 2016, during the ESCAP SDG Week,[10] with the intention of supporting wider application and involving government officials from project target countries and other experts.

(b) Technical services in partnership with subregional organizations and programmes

106. The secretariat supported the member States of the Central Asia subregion through the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum on Enhanced Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Cooperation as well as the Governing Council of the Special Programme, whose eleventh session was organized by ESCAP in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe, and held in Ganja, Azerbaijan, on 22 and 23 November 2016. The Governing Council adopted several decisions and the Ganja Declaration on Strengthening Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Enhanced Cooperation, which demonstrated a common vision for the subregion centred on a firm commitment to strengthen collaboration and policy coherence. It also repositioned the Special Programme as a platform for promoting policy coordination and coherence among its member countries.

107. In the Pacific, the secretariat has been working with other organizations to facilitate the development of a Pacific Sustainable Development Goal road map with the aim of formulating regional indicators and identifying a process for follow-up and review that would reduce the burden of reporting at the country level and support countries in the national implementation of the Goals, the Samoa Pathway and the Framework for

[10] For more details, refer to paragraph 95, reporting on resolution 71/9.

Pacific Regionalism. A key initial component of this exercise included a priority mapping exercise, which was held in November 2016. The secretariat also worked with the Pacific Community to organize a capacity-building workshop on building climate resilient agriculture in Pacific small island developing States in Nadi, Fiji, in August 2016.

108. In South and South-West Asia, the secretariat provided substantive support and guidance to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in order to strengthen its Gender Policy Advocacy Group and create a multi-year action plan. ESCAP is also providing technical assistance to the SAARC secretariat on strengthening food security through the operationalization of its Food Bank. The secretariat of the Commission provided further support to a high-level dialogue on the Sustainable Development Goals at the South Asian Speakers' Summit in Dhaka in January 2016, identifying seven top policy priorities to accelerate progress.

109. In South-East Asia, the secretariat is working with the ASEAN secretariat to analyse complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda and to promote awareness and political support for implementation in that subregion.

(c) Support for follow-up and review

110. ESCAP renewed its partnership with ADB and UNDP to support regional and national follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals and regional dialogue on implementation. As a part of this partnership, a thematic report for the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development was produced. In addition, the forthcoming Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals outlook report includes a discussion of the outlook for the region at the start of the implementation period. A Goals Data Portal, developed by ESCAP to support the partnership platform, makes data on the targets and indicators of the Goals and country profiles available to policymakers and the public.

111. The secretariat complemented these joint efforts on the *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific* and the ESCAP Statistical database, which provide key facts on economic, social and environmental development in support of regional analysis of achievements and challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

112. The secretariat is also providing guidance on strengthening follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. An expert dialogue on effective follow-up and review, held on 1 and 2 December 2016, produced recommendations to support the development of clearly defined processes, institutional frameworks and stakeholder engagement, in addition to data and monitoring at the regional and national levels.

113. Additional support to strengthening follow-up and review was provided by a policy analysis workshop held by the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on the transition towards sustainable agriculture in the context of the 2030 Agenda and strategic implementation, follow-up and review, which was held in Bogor, Indonesia, from 15 to 17 November 2016. It was attended by representatives from 14 countries, civil society organizations, research institutes, universities and United Nations organizations. The workshop enhanced the participants' capacity to engage in the creation, implementation and monitoring of progress on sustainable agriculture policies, and the participants adopted recommendations on strategic approaches to strengthening

regional and national capacities to facilitate an effective transition towards sustainable agriculture.

(d) Knowledge products and platforms

114. The secretariat held an SDG Week from 28 November to 2 December 2016 to bring together expert groups and other stakeholders to support national and regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Government officials, experts and other stakeholders joined workshops and other events on follow-up and review, means of implementation, support for countries with special needs, integrated approaches to Sustainable Development Goal planning, trade, investment and technology, gender, youth, international investment agreements, macroeconomic policy, sustainable development and agricultural trade for sustainable development.

115. The Asia-Pacific Knowledge Platform for Sustainable Development[11] has been strengthened with the inclusion of e-learning and other knowledge resources. Extrabudgetary resources are being mobilized to further strengthen the support provided to member States via a regional resource facility to improve access to a portfolio of knowledge, best practices and tools and to facilitate the establishment of partnerships in support of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

116. The Urban SDG Knowledge Platform[12] was launched as a specific regional response to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the urban level through knowledge development and the sharing of effective practices.

117. A knowledge platform on disaster risk reduction and resilience is being established through the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management, following its 1st Governing Council meeting in New Delhi on 2 November 2016 and the approval of the Centre's strategic plan, programme directions and work plan for 2016-2017. Another knowledge platform on information and communications technology (ICT) and disaster risk reduction, the ICT & DRR Gateway,[13] provides updated information. Its newest feature is an online community created so stakeholders can exchange ideas and information on key issues related to the Asia-Pacific information superhighway.

118. Other knowledge-sharing and advocacy products include the South and South-West Asia Sustainable Development Goals newsletters, which are being disseminated to a list of approximately 2,400 subscribers.

(e) Enhancing data and statistical capacity for sustainable development

119. The secretariat's work on building data and statistics capacity, in response to subparagraph 7 (c), is organized under a number of regional initiatives developed under the guidance of the Committee on Statistics. These initiatives address economic, population, social, gender, environment and disaster-related statistics, civil registration and vital statistics, and statistical training. They build on the ongoing implementation of United Nations Development Account projects, including the implementation of the tenth tranche of the Development Account project on statistics and data

[11] https://sustdev.unescap.org/.

[12] www.urbansdgplatform.org/service/index.do.

[13] http://drrgateway.net/.

(2016-2019), which encompasses four pillars of statistics: economic, social and environmental statistics and means of implementation. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific plays a critical role in capacity-building.

120. A collective vision and framework for multi-stakeholder action in the Asia-Pacific region to transform official statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals was developed at the Asia-Pacific Conference on Transforming Official Statistics for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and subregional events, which were held in Bangkok from 24 to 26 August 2016. Subregional workshops on data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals were organized by: ESCAP and the Central Statistics Office of India in Greater Noida, India, from 5 to 9 September 2016; ESCAP, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, and United Nations country teams in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 26 to 30 September 2016; and the Statistics Division of the United Nations, ESCAP, the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat), Eurostat, the European Free Trade Association and the Moscow Higher School of Economics in Belarus on 6 and 7 October 2016. The Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, at its twelfth session, also consulted on the resulting framework, which emphasizes related capacity strengthening. It was subsequently endorsed by the Committee on Statistics at its fifth session, which was held Bangkok from 14 to 16 December 2016.

121. Under the Regional Programme for the Improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific,[14] the Resource Facility, which was launched in August 2016, provides technical and financial support to member States embarking on studies to strengthen the quality of their economic statistics, including for the 97 of the 230 Sustainable Development Goal indicators that require economic statistics for their calculation. The Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week was launched in May 2016 with the objective of becoming a regular forum for statisticians of the region to exchange economic statistics research and information.[15] Four regional task forces were established comprising national economic statistics experts and international organizations. During 2016, ESCAP worked with Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam, within the Regional Programme, on a variety of economic statistics challenges, including institutional assessments or peer reviews, planning for economic statistics development, improved use of economic census results, revision of statistics laws, surveying trade-related costs, improvement of estimation of value-added from the agricultural sector, improving business statistics coverage, and enhanced use of tax data. In addition to regular meetings of the Steering Group and task forces of the Regional Programme, a number of project support meetings and consultations were organized for countries directly supported by ESCAP.

122. Work on a platform for support for civil registration and vital statistics was strengthened by the 2nd meeting of the Regional Steering Group for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Bangkok on 6 and 7 September 2016, at which members reviewed the achievements and main challenges described in the baseline reports from 36 countries on the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific and made recommendations to Governments and development partners to maintain momentum and accelerate progress by

[14] www.unescap.org/resources/regional-programme-improvement-economic-statistics-asia-and-pacific-rpes.

[15] http://communities.unescap.org/system/files/apes_report_compiled_full_final.pdf.

leveraging the emphasis on Sustainable Development Goals. A training workshop on data analysis and report writing for civil registration data and vital statistics was held in Noumea from 19 to 29 September 2016. It was organized by ESCAP, as a member of the Brisbane Accord Group on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in the Pacific, in collaboration with the Pacific Community and other Brisbane Accord Group members. A project to strengthen national capacities to produce and disseminate vital statistics from civil registration records in Asia and the Pacific was implemented from December 2016 to March 2017 with funding support under a memorandum of understanding with the Data for Health Initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

123. In the area of evidence-based disability policy development and monitoring, the secretariat supported a series of national consultations in its member States, including Bhutan (26-28 October 2016), Indonesia (14-16 November 2016) and Georgia (17-19 January 2017), to strengthen national statistical systems from a disability perspective and to develop action plans for the collection of the comparable disability statistics required for the monitoring of the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. The United Nations Regional Meeting on Disability Measurement and Statistics in support of the 2030 Agenda and the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme was organized by the Statistics Division of the United Nations and the Statistics and Social Development Divisions of ESCAP and held in Bangkok from 26 to 28 July 2016 to facilitate the creation of regional perspectives on the global development of measurement standards for disability statistics and to facilitate country experiences in collecting, disseminating and using disability statistics.

124. Work to develop a statistical framework and guidance for a basic range of disaster-related statistics progressed through a series of national studies, which were structured using the draft disaster-related statistics framework developed by the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific. Four volunteer countries (Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia and the Philippines) took the lead in piloting the framework and were provided technical advice by ESCAP. The results were discussed at the preparatory country consultation on 3 and 4 October 2016 and the 4th meeting of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics on 5 and 6 October 2016, which were hosted by the Philippines and organized by the Statistics Division.

125. A workshop on sex-disaggregated data for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators in Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok from 25 to 27 May 2016. It yielded recommendations on country and partnership actions to advance the work of ESCAP and other development partners. An interregional workshop on improving gender statistics for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment, which was held Bangkok from 6 to 8 June 2016, brought together experts from the countries participating in the Development Account project in Asia and the Pacific, West Asia and Europe to review experiences at the conclusion of the project and to suggest ways forward to sustain the impact of the project.

126. ESCAP intensified its support for countries wishing to strengthen environmental statistics and environmental-economic accounting. An approach emphasizing the identification and prioritization of environmental policy priorities, balanced with feasibility studies of available data sources, proved useful for countries embarking on an improvement process. Supporting tools, including a diagnostic tool, an inventory template, and additional training modules on the System of Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting and the Framework for the Development of

Environment Statistics, were developed and piloted through a number of subregional and national technical events. Outreach to, and collaboration with, relevant knowledge partners, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNDP, also increased. Three workshops were held: a workshop on the System of Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting implementation for land and forest accounts in Nepal, in Kathmandu from 3 to 6 October 2016; a training programme on the System of Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting for Asia-Pacific small island developing States, in Nadi from 14 to 16 September 2016; and a subregional workshop on environment statistics for South-East Asian countries, in Bangkok from 2 to 4 November 2016.

127. The Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific held its first group training programme on improving capability in producing official statistics for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, System of National Accounts Modules, from 22 August to 16 December 2016. It also continued to provide training on official statistics, including the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics , the System of National Accounts (integrated transaction accounts, basic and intermediate), and other topics, including communication and advocacy for agricultural and rural statistics, GDP coverage, computer-assisted personal interviewing and data collection with Survey Solutions, sampling methods for producing core data items for agricultural and rural statistics, agricultural cost of production statistics, and statistical business registers.[16]

128. Statistical capacity was also built through technical advisory services and training in several areas, including economic statistics (Maldives), data needs for socially inclusive policies and programmes (ASEAN), Sustainable Development Goal indicators and reporting requirements (Cambodia), disaster statistics (Fiji), the System of Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting implementation (Fiji, Nepal, Vanuatu), statistics for economies based on natural resources (Mongolia), census and economic statistics (Bhutan), and environmental statistics (Malaysia, Myanmar).

129. In response to subparagraph 7 (d), the secretariat supported member States in areas related to the means of implementation, including financing, trade and technology, as well as the use of modelling and other tools.

(f) Strengthening the delivery of the means of implementation

130. Trade-related support included country-, firm-, sectoral- and community-level research and analysis for promoting inclusive and sustainable trade and investment in support of quality jobs and sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

131. In response to subparagraph 7 (d) and the specific request of a member State, and through the additional technical capacity on climate change provided under section 23 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, the secretariat facilitated, through the Subregional Office for the Pacific, the first workshop under the Development Account project on innovative climate finance mechanisms for financial institutions in the Asia-Pacific region in Fiji. It was attended by the representatives of the central bank, a number of commercial banks, the Fiji Development Bank and the Ministry of Finance. At the workshop, the main instruments for greening finance and related initiatives were introduced.

[16] www.unsiap.or.jp/programmes/sna.html and www.unsiap.or.jp/e-learning.

132. A regional mechanism to support the global Technology Facilitation Mechanism is under development. Other technology-related support was provided through programmes and activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development. The secretariat also held capacity-building events, including two subregional workshops on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway on Internet traffic management and on e-resilience in Thimphu.

133. The secretariat is also working to build the capacity of member States to use geospatial technologies and information systems to address disaster risk identification and improve early warning systems and response and recovery activities. Activities provided technical advisory services. Regional workshops and training activities were held: a workshop on strengthening multi-hazard risk assessment and early warning systems with applications of space and geographic information systems among the Pacific island countries in September 2016, which was organized with the Subregional Office for the Pacific; a regional training event on multi-hazard early warning in Hyderabad, India, in September 2016, which was hosted by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services; and a regional training on flood forecasting in transboundary river basins at the Asian Institute of Technology in Pathumthani, Thailand, in October 2016, which was organized with the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia.

134. Partnerships with the private sector were mobilized in the area of ICT and disaster risk reduction. The Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Private Sector Consultative meeting was held in Bangkok in April 2016. The secretariat organized the 4th meeting of the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network's Task Force on Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction in Bangkok on 31 October 2016, at which members developed a work plan, including a regional guide for chambers of commerce to strengthen disaster and climate resilience among small and medium-sized enterprises. The secretariat also organized a special session on the subject at the Asia-Pacific Business Forum in Bangladesh in February 2017.

135. In addition, ESCAP co-hosted with the Internet Society the Asia-Pacific Regional Internet and Development Dialogue, held in Bangkok in October 2016. The meeting was attended by more than 100 participants representing civil society, the private sector, academia and the media and provided a unique multi-stakeholder platform at the regional level.

(g) Modelling and tools for integrated approaches and strengthening implementation

136. In addition to support in the area of the means of implementation, the secretariat supported modelling and tools for integrated approaches. A network of experts and practitioners on models and tools for the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals was established to enhance the national capacities of policymakers and other stakeholders. The network will act as a catalyst to improve understanding of national-level monitoring and policy simulation on the Goals. Further engagement with these experts can provide capacity-building support to policymakers for designing and implementing policies and strategies for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

137. The Regional Capacity-building Workshop on Sustainable Development Goals Modelling for the Least Developed Countries in Asia and the Pacific was held in Vientiane on 30 June 2016. Participants at the workshop highlighted the importance of using integrated models and tools for

a better understanding and assessment of infrastructure development within the context of the 2030 Agenda.

138. The secretariat also provided tools to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda with a focus on the social dimension of sustainable development. A tool for tracking migration flows publishes and regularly updates a database of annual migrant worker outflows from key countries of origin in the Asia-Pacific region; the data are disaggregated by country of destination and in some cases by sex and/or skill-level. The Social Protection Toolbox[17] provides policymakers with access to a database of good practices in social protection measures, a self-assessment tool to identify national gaps in designing and implementing policies, a searchable network of experts and organizations, and an e-learning training course.

139. The Youth Toolbox continues to provide policymakers with a comprehensive resource for developing inclusive and responsive youth policies. Particular attention was directed towards enhancing the school-to-work transition for young people, specifically through the promotion of better understanding of youth's needs. As part of its work on income security and long-term care for older persons, the secretariat provides a toolkit consisting of a repository of knowledge and data on existing pension systems in selected countries of the region as well as a training course on public pensions, which is conducted in cooperation with the National Pension Service of the Republic of Korea and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Korea Policy Centre. Policymakers are provided with suggested action points for reform of pension systems and lessons learned from other countries. Guidelines on the provision of long-term care for older persons support policymakers in making decisions on how to finance long-term care.

140. In response to paragraph 9, the secretariat continued to strengthen the work of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism.

(h) Strengthening relevance, focus and accountability of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism

141. Steps taken since the adoption of the resolution include the realignment of the Regional Coordination Mechanism thematic working groups with the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the establishment of terms of reference and work plans for each thematic working group, which include outputs in support of least developed, land-locked and Pacific island developing countries, among other subregional groupings. The thematic working groups support knowledge-sharing and will be involved in tracking progress on the 2030 Agenda and coordinating support at the regional level.

142. The seven new thematic working groups are on resource efficient growth; sustainable societies; inclusive development and poverty eradication; disaster risk reduction and resilience; gender equality and the empowerment of women; education 2030+; and statistics. The thematic working groups have work plans for 2016-2017 which include joint outputs that will feed into the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and its reporting to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The thematic working groups will be positioning future work plans to align with the high-level political forum themes and the mandates of the Asia-Pacific regional road map. The Regional Coordination Mechanism has also cooperated in the negotiation and adoption of the ASEAN-United Nations Plan of Action for 2016-2020, which specifically supports ASEAN member States in identifying

[17] www.socialprotection-toolbox.org.

the complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda.

143. In addition, a communications plan has been developed for the Regional Coordination Mechanism which included the launching of a new website in 2016 that provides comprehensive reporting and archiving of collaboration efforts among the United Nations agencies in Asia and the Pacific, including work that is produced by the Regional Coordination Mechanism thematic working groups.

144. In response to paragraph 10, the present report will be submitted to the Commission at its seventy-third session.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

145. Member states are invited to review the present document with a view to ensuring that they are able to benefit from the work done to date and to provide further guidance to the secretariat on the development of these and other activities.

146. The secretariat has requested member States to identify national coordination focal points, which has given member States who have designated such focal points better access to information on the work of ESCAP, including on the development of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific and the organization of SDG Week in November 2016. Member States that have not designated such focal points are invited to follow up in this regard.

147. Member States are invited to support the implementation of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific, which will be considered for adoption at the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

C. Resolution 72/8
Fostering regional cooperation and partnerships to respond to the climate change challenge in the Asia-Pacific region

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

148. In paragraph 2 of resolution 72/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to encourage and collaborate with relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, regional and subregional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations in line with the existing mandates and resources of the Commission, to promote capacity-building of member States, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, regarding climate change and climate resilience in the areas in which the Commission has existing capacity and expertise, including climate-related disaster risk reduction, through policy dialogues and the sharing of experiences and information, where appropriate.

149. In paragraph 3 of resolution 72/8, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

150. In response to paragraph 2, and through the additional technical capacity on climate change provided under section 23 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, the secretariat developed the concept for, and organized with the Subregional Office for the Pacific and the Ministry of Finance of Fiji, the first workshop of the Pacific Climate Change Financing Initiative in Suva in August 2016, back to back with the second Pacific regional workshop of the Green Climate Fund. The Pacific Climate Change Financing Initiative workshop was attended by nine Pacific island States. The topics addressed included public and private climate finance channels, including carbon and results-based finance and a discussion of where those countries see the bottlenecks in accessing climate finance. The workshop also addressed the type of support they need to overcome those bottlenecks in order to promote their understanding of the full spectrum of climate finance instruments available and of emerging innovative instruments so that they could fully integrate climate actions into their development plans through incremental costing of adaptation and mitigation actions and meet the challenge of scaling up by developing programmatic, sectoral-based and multi-country approaches when building their project pipeline. The secretariat will take those needs into account in further developing the Initiative together with the Ministry of Finance of Fiji and relevant partners.

151. In response to paragraph 2, and the specific request of a member State, and through the additional technical capacity on climate change provided under section 23, the secretariat facilitated, with assistance from the Subregional Office for the Pacific, the first workshop under the Development Account project on innovative climate finance mechanisms for financial institutions in the Asia-Pacific region in Fiji. It was attended by representatives of the central bank, a number of commercial banks, the Fiji Development Bank and the Ministry of Finance. At the workshop, the main instruments for greening finance and related initiatives in other countries in the region were introduced. Key stakeholders were brought together to identify potential entry points for developing a few concrete regulatory or voluntary tools for greening finance in Fiji and to hear about past initiatives in Fiji, including a regulatory instrument which imposed a minimum target for commercial loans made to renewable energy projects as a proportion of total bank commercial lending portfolios. Going forward, the secretariat will partner with a suitable subregional organization to implement the project in Fiji. Further, in the light of the exponential growth enjoyed by green bonds in the Asia-Pacific region and, given the scale of financing needed to transition to decarbonized and climate-resilient economies, the secretariat, in partnership with the Climate Bonds Initiative or a similar organization, will also assess the applicability of this instrument to the countries in the Pacific subregion, especially with regard to the size and depth of their capital markets, and will explore concrete solutions, including developing an instrument that is pooled across a number of countries.

152. In response to paragraph 2, and through the additional research capacity provided under section 23, the secretariat produced a policy-relevant working paper on the economics of climate change, which was launched at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and is available on the ESCAP website. The objective of the working paper is to enhance capacity and understanding of the costs to the Asia-Pacific region imposed by climate change, the costs of action, and the economic instruments that are relevant to the region, or have been successfully applied, to combat climate change. Five key actions to address climate change in the Asia-Pacific region are

highlighted: (a) ensuring adaptation to climate change and improving resilience; (b) phasing out fossil fuel subsidies; (c) encouraging renewable energy and energy efficiency; (d) implementing carbon pricing; and (e) expanding climate finance. In the working paper the importance of regional cooperation to address the region's many challenges with regard to climate change was emphasized.

153. In response to paragraph 2, the secretariat, through its own capacity and that provided under section 23, also produced four policy briefing notes on energy efficiency, climate change and transport, climate change and ICT, and climate finance within the context of its financing for development work. The notes described the key challenges for sectors, including the adaptation and mitigation aspects, and areas to strengthen regional cooperation and the Commission's role.

154. In response to paragraph 2, and to two requests received by member States, the secretariat, through the additional technical capacity provided under section 23, held a regional workshop on the role of climate finance for rural energy access in December 2016 in Kathmandu with the Government of Nepal, at the same time as the Energy Division's workshop on pro-poor public-private partnerships for expanding access to energy services. Within the context of identifying viable private sector partnership models for sustainable rural energy access and the necessary enabling policy and institutional environment to widen private sector investment, the workshop, inter alia, built awareness among policymakers on available climate finance instruments, on how to access funds or attract private sector finance, and on how to mobilize the required resources, especially for energy access.

155. In response to paragraph 2, and to three requests received by member States, the secretariat, through the additional technical capacity provided under section 23, held a subregional workshop on the role of climate finance in January 2017 in Kathmandu, at the same time as the Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division's Policy Dialogue on Infrastructure Financing Strategies for Sustainable Development in South and South-West Asia. Within the context of mobilizing more domestic resources for infrastructure and tapping private sector financing sources, the workshop, inter alia, built capacity to leverage climate finance for green infrastructure development.

156. In response to paragraph 2, the secretariat, through the additional technical capacity provided under section 23, supported the preparatory work of the Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division for a tax forum in December 2016 in Bangkok for the areas of green fiscal policy and urban financing.

157. Finally, in response to paragraph 2, the secretariat is preparing a discussion paper on climate change which will highlight the region's climate change challenges, the key priorities of member States in responding to these challenges, and, based on its comparative advantage and cross-sectoral expertise, the role ESCAP can play in supporting this process.

V. Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction and management

A. Resolution 70/13
Regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

158. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 70/13, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, international and regional financing institutions, development partners and international organizations, as appropriate, to:

(a) Further strengthen regional space cooperation on disaster risk reduction, including the applications of space technology and geographic information systems, by enhancing the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development and its education and training networks;

(b) Facilitate the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development planning, as appropriate, including through information-sharing and building the capacity of member States;

(c) Promote the sharing of knowledge, technology and skills in disaster risk reduction among member States through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation;

(d) Continue analytical work as well as sharing of best practices on building the resilience of member States to disasters in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other organizations involved in disaster risk reduction, including through the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report*;

(e) Support and facilitate the extension and operationalization of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning in drought-prone countries in the region;

(f) Promote private sector engagement in disaster risk reduction, such as through public-private partnerships and the sharing of experiences in the region in engaging the private sector more effectively in disaster risk reduction, including through the ESCAP Business Advisory Council;

(g) Further enhance partnerships and collaboration in disaster risk reduction with regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific, including ASEAN and SAARC, building on the efforts of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and its thematic working group on the environment and disaster risk management to implement the One United Nations initiative.

2. Progress made

159. In response to subparagraph 6 (a), the secretariat promoted the applications of space technology for disaster risk reduction through the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development as a unique regional cooperative platform to bring together national space agencies in the Asia-Pacific region and to help disaster-affected countries through support with satellite-derived data, products and services. The secretariat is promoting capacity-building training activities through the Regional Space Applications Programme's education and training networks. As a result, space applications products and services are readily available for

disaster risk management through the regional cooperative programmes promoted by the secretariat. Further, the secretariat organized the Asia-Pacific Space Leaders Forum in New Delhi on 2 November 2016 as a pre-conference event of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to support a regional plan for countries to access and effectively utilize space applications. The Space Leaders Forum outlined the new Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Space Applications, 2018-2030, which included pillars on disaster risk reduction and resilience, environment and natural resources, and geospatial information for services and infrastructure.

160. In response to subparagraph 6 (b), secretariat is implementing the Development Account project on enhancing knowledge and capacity for the management of disaster risks for a resilient future in Asia and the Pacific through a regional programme that is supporting the mainstreaming and integration of disaster risk reduction into development planning to bolster the efforts of member States. The programme contributes to developing the strategic framework for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, including climate change adaptation, into sustainable development planning, as well as the sectoral guidelines and analytical tools for ex ante risk assessment and ex post damage, loss and needs assessment with a building back better approach for resilient recovery.

161. In response to subparagraph 6 (c), the secretariat organized a number of activities to promote the sharing of knowledge, technology and skills for disaster risk reduction among member States through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation. For example, the regional recovery dialogues ESCAP organized with the National Planning Commission of Nepal and the SAARC Disaster Management Centre in October 2015 following the 2015 Gorkha earthquake in Nepal provided a platform for experts to share recovery experiences from major earthquakes in India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan with those involved in recovery efforts of the Gorkha earthquake. Following the 2015-2016 El Niño events, ESCAP, with UNDP, brought together 60 participants from 14 El Niño-affected countries for a regional consultative workshop on El Niño in the Asia-Pacific region in June 2016. Similarly, ESCAP, with the support of the Subregional Office for the Pacific and with the Pacific Community, organized a capacity-building workshop on building climate-resilient agriculture in Pacific small island developing States in Nadi in August 2016. The workshop served as a South-South cooperation forum, where stakeholders from climate-sensitive agricultural sectors of Pacific small island developing States engaged in knowledge exchange on mainstreaming climate adaptation and climate-sensitive risk reduction strategies into sustainable and resilient agricultural planning, based on the sharing of replicable good practices and strategies from Asia.

162. In response to subparagraph 6 (d), the secretariat's flagship publication *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2015*, contained a report on the state of the region's resilience, throwing light on fairly neglected areas of disaster risk reduction, such as slow-onset drought and early warning and information management systems, and detailed the critical role of regional cooperation in addressing cross-border disasters. The secretariat continued its analytical work with annual publications such as "Disasters in Asia and the Pacific: 2015 Year in Review" and the 2016 edition of the same, the Science and Policy Knowledge Series with papers on "El Niño/La Niña 2016 impact" and "El Niño 2015/2016 impact outlook and policy implications", a manual on rapid assessment for resilient recovery, and a tool kit for flood forecasting and early warning in transboundary river basins.

163. In response to subparagraph 6 (e), the secretariat is supporting and facilitating the extension and operationalization of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning through pilots in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka with enhanced access to space-based data, products and services; institutional capacity-building in drought early warning, preparedness and response; and strengthened institutional coordination and policies for those countries.

164. In response to subparagraph 6 (f), the secretariat has put in place the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network's Task Force on Disaster and Climate Risk Reduction. The Task Force is engaging the private sector more effectively in disaster risk reduction, including through the ESCAP Business Advisory Council. The Task Force regularly organizes regional dialogues on building momentum towards a more substantive Asia-Pacific Business Forum that engages disaster risk reduction.

165. In response to subparagraph 6 (g), ESCAP implemented global initiatives and tools in the Asia-Pacific region for which ESCAP, UNDP and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre are working together to further strengthen the post-disaster needs assessment process by enhancing regional capacity. Further, ESCAP and SAARC have developed an analytical tool for rapid post-disaster assessment based on the innovative use of space technology applications, geospatial modelling, navigation systems and crowdsourcing. The ESCAP-led Regional Coordination Mechanism served as an important regional platform for enhancing coherence and partnership for the United Nations system. In particular, its thematic working group on disaster risk reduction and resilience, co-chaired by ESCAP, UNDP and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, has been working towards greater coherence in its engagement with ASEAN, and it put forth the ASEAN-United Nations Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management 2016-2020.

B. Resolution 71/10
Strengthening regional information and communications technology connectivity through the Asia-Pacific information superhighway

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

166. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 71/10, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Promote the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in ICT for disaster risk reduction, management and response, and building e-resilience;

(b) Provide the necessary support through, inter alia, the subregional offices, to facilitate the work of the Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway;

(c) Continue the fact-finding initiatives and analysis on the Asia Pacific information superhighway, including by enhancing its maps, through partnerships with the International Telecommunication Union and regional policy research institutions;

(d) Continue working on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway in collaboration with international and regional partners, including the International Telecommunication Union, the World Bank, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway and ADB;

(e) Promote, in collaboration with national, regional and international development partners, civil society and the private sector, the exchange of best practices and experiences and knowledge related to the development of ICT infrastructure, including in-depth analysis of the policy and regulatory barriers that may impede efforts to synchronize the deployment of infrastructure across the region in a seamless manner;

(f) Explore further ways to harness cross-sectoral synergies, including through the review of best practices to recommend solutions to leverage synergies among ICT, energy and transport infrastructures across the region, including for the co-deployment of fibre along infrastructures;

(g) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

167. In response to subparagraph 3 (a), the secretariat published the reports entitled, "An in-depth study on the broadband infrastructure in Afghanistan and Mongolia", "A pre-feasibility study on the Asia-Pacific information superhighway in the ASEAN subregion: conceptualization, international traffic and quality analysis, network topology design and implementation model", "Building e-resilience in Sri Lanka, enhancing the role of information and communications technology for disaster risk management", and "State of ICT in Asia and the Pacific 2016: uncovering the widening broadband divide".

168. Several expert group meetings were also held, providing a forum for the exchange of national experiences on broadband connectivity and the digital divide, including the development of the Asia-Pacific information superhighway, in Bangkok in October 2016 and in Thimphu in December 2016. A regional workshop on resilient ICT connectivity for the knowledge economy, the Sustainable Development Goals and the World Summit on the Information Society Goals was held in Almaty in September 2016. A workshop on knowledge and policy gaps in disaster risk reduction and development planning was held in Bangkok in March 2016 to strengthen ICT capacities for disaster risk reduction and development. The secretariat also refocused the ICT & DRR Gateway, which provides updated information on ICT development and disaster risk reduction. A new feature, the online community, facilitates exchange of information and ideas by various stakeholders on key issues related to the Asia-Pacific information superhighway, including the work of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee.

169. In response to subparagraph 3 (b), the secretariat continued to provide the necessary support to the Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway. Its 2nd meeting was held in Guangzhou, China, in August 2016. The first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation was held in Bangkok from 5 to 7 October 2016, at which the Committee endorsed the outcomes of the Working Group meetings, including the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document.

170. In response to subparagraph 3 (c), the secretariat published the report entitled "A pre-feasibility study on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway in the ASEAN subregion: conceptualization, international traffic and quality analysis, network topology design and implementation model" in collaboration with the National Information Society Agency of the Republic of Korea. The secretariat continued to provide updated information

based on a report entitled "Updated analysis of the broadband infrastructure in Asia Pacific", with a view towards enhancing its maps with the International Telecommunication Union.

171. In response to subparagraph 3 (d), the secretariat co-hosted an inter-agency working group meeting on ICT in Bangkok in November 2016, while working closely with various partners in the Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway as well as undertaking research, analysis and capacity-building.

172. In response to subparagraph 3 (e), the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Private Sector Consultative meeting was held in Bangkok in April 2016. In collaboration with the Internet Society, ESCAP co-hosted an Asia-Pacific Regional Internet and Development Dialogue in Bangkok in October 2016, which was attended by more than 100 participants representing civil society, the private sector, academia and the media and which provided a unique multi-stakeholder platform at the regional level.

173. In response to subparagraph 3 (f), the secretariat published the report entitled "Intelligent transportation systems for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific", which included an exploration of the ways ICT can improve the sustainable impact of transport through the design of intelligent transport systems. Furthermore, through the Working Group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, Bangladesh submitted to the secretariat a request for amendments to the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway Networks to enable cross-sectoral co-deployment of fibre cables.

3. Issues for consideration by the Commission

174. The Commission is invited to consider for adoption a resolution on the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document, as endorsed by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation at its first session.

C. Resolution 71/12
Strengthening regional mechanisms for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

175. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 71/12, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Accord priority to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 by strengthening the role and capacity of the secretariat in the area of ICT and disaster risk reduction for the provision of policy recommendations, regional guidelines, technical assistance and advisory services for developing countries, particularly those that are at high risk and have low capacity;

(b) Coordinate with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other relevant United Nations organizations and stakeholders to help member States to monitor and report on progress in their implementation of the Sendai Framework in conjunction with the sustainable

development monitoring and accountability framework, including through the development of a basic range of disaster-related statistics;

(c) Establish formal linkages between the Commission's interdisciplinary and intergovernmental platforms with regional platforms on disaster risk reduction in order to promote the integration of disaster risk reduction and the building of resilience into policies, plans, programmes and budgets at all sectors and levels of government aimed at achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction goals;

(d) Guide actions at the regional level through agreed regional and subregional strategies and mechanisms to strengthen disaster risk modelling, assessment, mapping, monitoring and multi-hazard early warning systems of common and transboundary disasters, particularly those related to hydrometeorological issues, by deepening existing regional cooperation mechanisms such as the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee, the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones and the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning, as well as by extending regional cooperation for floods, glacial lake outburst floods and landslides;

(e) Through the Asia-Pacific Regional Cooperation Mechanism, to: (i) implement a One United Nations approach to promote coherence of instruments and tools relevant to disaster risk reduction across the United Nations system and relevant regional organizations; (ii) strengthen the ASEAN-United Nations Strategic Plan of Cooperation on Disaster Management for the implementation of the Sendai Framework; and (iii) extend such approaches of cooperation to other subregional organizations, such as the SAARC, the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific;

(f) Assist developing countries in Asia and the Pacific to gain from advances in science, technology, and innovation, in particular with regard to applications of space technology and geographic information systems, by increasing access to and use of geospatial information and space-derived data, products and services, and strengthening disaster risk modelling, monitoring and impact assessment;

(g) Work with the Advisory Council of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries to further strengthen the Trust Fund and expand its geographic scope to include Pacific small island developing States.

2. Progress made

176. In reference to subparagraphs 4 (a), (b) and (c), the secretariat supported member States in shaping strategies and policy on disaster risk reduction by providing high-quality research publications such as the *Asia Pacific Disaster Report* and a series of analytical and policy briefs, as well as establishing an expert group comprising statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts to work towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics to strengthen statistics for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Through these efforts, ESCAP promoted a multisectoral policy planning outlook enabling disaster risk reduction to be mainstreamed and integrated into development plans and frameworks.

177. In coordination with on the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other relevant United Nations organizations, the secretariat continued its efforts to strengthen the regional mechanism for the implementation of the Sendai Framework through its contributions to the first Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction after the adoption

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of the Sendai Framework in March 2015. At the Conference, the secretariat worked with the Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and organized the ministerial sessions and featured events on regional cooperation, as well as thematic sessions on disaster information management and the implementation of multi-hazard early warning systems. These contributions were reflected in the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

178. The secretariat deployed regional advisory services as requested by member States to deliver normative support and policy expertise to augment their domestic resources and capabilities with better access to capacity-building resources, technical assistance and technology transfer. ESCAP provided policy advisory support for the alignment of national policies in Bhutan and Indonesia with the Sendai Framework and for the review and codification of various technical guides on disaster management in the context of post-Typhoon Haiyan recovery in the Philippines.

179. In response to subparagraph 4 (d), the secretariat and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) actively supported the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones. The secretariat supported the expansion and strengthening of their activities for closer regional cooperation on early warning systems and improved integration in the fields of meteorology, hydrology and disaster risk reduction. They undertake original research and pilot projects to improve understanding of tropical cyclones and related hazards. To strengthen cooperation between the two platforms, ESCAP hosted a joint session of the Committee and the Panel in February 2015, which led to an agreement on a new cooperative mechanism enabling the sharing of second-generation meteorological satellite data and products and advanced modelling skills for improved forecasting and early warning. The mechanism will also facilitate joint initiatives to enhance the capacities of member States with support from the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres in India and Japan.

180. To strengthen regional early warning systems, the secretariat launched the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning in Asia and the Pacific, which marshals regional resources for integrated analysis of space and in-season ground data and information. The Mechanism is useful in building the resilience of agrarian communities in developing countries that are perennially affected by drought. Participating pilot countries in Asia and the Pacific (Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), have benefited from enhanced access to space-based data, products and services. The secretariat has developed a tool kit for flood forecasting and early warning in transboundary river basins and is working on establishing professional research networks in the areas of glacial lake outburst floods and landslides.

181. In response to subparagraph 4 (e), the ESCAP-led Regional Coordination Mechanism served as an important platform for enhancing coherence and partnership for the United Nations system. Its thematic working group on disaster risk reduction and resilience partnered with ASEAN to develop the ASEAN-United Nations Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management 2016-2020. It includes four key pillars, including the risk awareness and assessment pillar which is led by the secretariat. The thematic working group's experience creating greater coherence in engagement with subregional organizations offers a blueprint for the secretariat for more strategic engagements in other subregions and thematic areas. Following the

ASEAN-United Nations approach, ESCAP has initiated its engagement with SAARC and the Economic Cooperation Organization.

182. In response to subparagraph 4 (f), the secretariat serves as a regional hub to harness the latest advances in space technology and geographic information systems for member States to enhance their capacities in risk identification, early warning systems, response efforts, and post-disaster damage and loss assessment. The secretariat provides a multilateral platform for enhancing scientific and technical work on disaster risk reduction by sharing knowledge and skills for building consensus on the effective use of geospatial information in reducing disaster risk. The work of the secretariat has focused on the timely provision of space-derived data, products and services as well as on institutional capacity-building in the use of space technology and geographic information systems for disaster risk reduction.

183. In particular, through its long-standing Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, the secretariat promoted applications of space technology for disaster risk reduction. The Regional Space Applications Programme, as a unique regional cooperative platform, brings together national space agencies in the Asia-Pacific region to help disaster-affected countries with the support of satellite-derived data, products and services. Through efforts by member States, as part of the Regional Space Applications Programme, countries without their own space programmes can now access and effectively utilize space-derived data, products and services for disaster management. Space applications are increasingly being used by countries in Asia and the Pacific for disaster management and are readily available through the regional cooperative programmes promoted by the secretariat.

184. As part of the Regional Space Applications Programme, the secretariat organized the Asia-Pacific Space Leaders Forum in New Delhi on 2 November 2016 as a pre-conference event of the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to support a regional plan for countries to access and effectively utilize space applications. The Space Leaders Forum outlined a new Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Space Applications, 2018-2030, which included pillars on disaster risk reduction and resilience, environment and natural resources, and geospatial information for services and infrastructure.

185. In response to subparagraph 4 (g), the secretariat organized the 16th Advisory Council meeting of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries in Bangkok on 25 October, 2016. Projects were put forward and discussed by donors for the next round of funding. Decisions are still pending. The Trust Fund Strategy 2017-2020 was finalized and released at the end of 2016.

D. Resolution 72/7
Regional cooperation to combat sand and dust storms in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

186. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 72/7, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Within existing mandates and expertise, accord priority focus on the work of the Commission relating to sand and dust storms as a great transboundary challenge;

(b) Work, including through the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management, as well as with other relevant regional organizations, utilizing a combination of existing funds and extrabudgetary contributions, to promote regional and interregional networking on sand and dust storms;

(c) Work closely with UNEP, WMO and the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa in the process of preparing the global assessment on sand and dust storms;

(d) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session and thereafter on a biennial basis on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

187. In response to paragraph 6, the secretariat continued its efforts for the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management as a subsidiary body of the Commission. At the 1st Governing Council meeting of the Centre, which was held in New Delhi on 2 November 2016, the Council approved the Centre's strategic plan and programme directions. It also approved the Centre's work plan for 2016-2017 and its programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019, which includes items on the enhancement of regional cooperation mechanisms that engage the member countries concerned to address sand and dust storms in partnership with UNEP, WMO and the secretariat of the Convention on Combatting Desertification. In 2017, the secretariat, and its partners, will hold an expert meeting on sand and dust storms to promote regional and interregional networking on the topic. Attendees will also discuss the modality for developing the regional cooperation mechanism for sand and dust storms in partnership with UNEP, WMO and secretariat of the Convention.

VI. Social development

Resolution 70/14
Enhancing participation of youth in sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

188. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/14, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Undertake a comprehensive analytical study on the need for youth inclusion and its relationship to sustainable development as a basis for evidence-based policies;

(b) Enhance the role of the Commission as a regional platform for sharing experiences and good practices on youth policies and participation;

(c) Encourage the participation of key stakeholders, including youth-led organizations, other civil society organizations and the private sector, in supporting national and regional efforts to address challenges impeding youth development, including the convening of an intergovernmental meeting to bring such stakeholders together to assess progress made in meeting international commitments and enhancing youth development;

(d) Support members and associate members, upon request, by providing technical assistance to strengthen their capacity for effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth;

(e) Coordinate, with other United Nations bodies, including through the Regional Coordination Mechanism, to ensure synergies and enhance the impact of the work of the United Nations system on youth development in Asia and the Pacific;

(f) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the progress made in implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

189. In response to subparagraph 2 (a), the secretariat developed a project on realizing youth inclusion for a more sustainable Asia-Pacific region. Primary research, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, was conducted in Cambodia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The quantitative questionnaire, which included 180 questions related to sociodemographic status, exclusion from education, employment and sociopolitical spheres, and governance issues, was translated into all the relevant languages and administered to more than 10,000 youth across the six countries. Random sampling was used, with equal representation of male and female youth, while single-sex focus group discussions took place in each country to obtain more in-depth views. The data from all the countries were subsequently analysed and the project report was written with a view to promoting awareness of the needs and aspirations of youth and advocating for their greater inclusion in the development process. Key findings were included, for example that gender remained a large contributor to inequality, often restricting access to education and employment and participation in political activities. However, youth from low wealth groups, ethnic minorities, certain castes or religious groups were in many cases found to be even more excluded from such spheres, including limited access to associations and the Internet, while also receiving fewer opportunities to increase social and human capital.

190. In response to subparagraphs 2 (b) and (d), the secretariat, as part of the ESCAP-led Development Account project, strengthening the capacity of Governments in the regions of ESCAP, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to respond to the needs of youth in formulating inclusive and sustainable development policies, began developing an online resource facility to promote enhanced school-to-work transitions among youth. The facility is due to serve as a toolbox of policy and programme options and knowledge-sharing, with a wide array of good practices showcasing efforts and initiatives to match the education and training of youth with decent employment opportunities. As part of the development of the toolbox, technical assistance was provided to several members, including India, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, to build capacity in implementing elements of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

191. In response to subparagraph 2 (c), the secretariat convened the fourth session of its Committee on Social Development in March 2016. The Committee reviewed challenges and highlighted good practices with regard to enhancing the school-to-work transition among youth; other challenges, such as country-specific challenges regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and more effective integration of the social into the economic and environmental dimensions were reviewed. Representatives of Governments,

youth-led organizations and other civil society organizations actively participated in deliberations.

192. In response to subparagraph 2 (e), the secretariat, as Co-Chair, with ILO, of the former Regional Coordination Mechanism/United Nations Development Group Thematic Working Group on Youth, finalized and published online and print versions of *Switched On: Youth at the Heart of Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific*. It examined the 2030 Agenda from a youth perspective, following the "five Ps": people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. It contains a discussion on the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development with an emphasis on the need to create conditions for youth to be an engaged, active and integral part of the solutions that are required.

VII. Energy

Resolution 70/9
Implementation of the outcomes of the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum

1. Requirements of the operative paragraphs

193. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 70/9, the Commission decided to convene the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum at the ministerial level in 2018.

194. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 70/9, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific: Shaping the Future of Sustainable Energy in Asia and the Pacific and the Plan of Action on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2018;

(b) Undertake a periodic review of the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action based on information provided on a voluntary basis by members and associate members, as well as by collaborating international organizations;

(c) Begin the necessary preparatory work for the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum in a timely manner, including consultations with the Government of Tonga regarding the hosting of the meeting;

(d) Report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the progress in implementation of the resolution.

2. Progress made

195. In response to subparagraph 4 (a), the secretariat continued to make regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy in Asia and the Pacific a key priority in the strategic direction and work of the Commission.

196. In its resolution 71/1 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission to be fit for the evolving post-2015 development agenda, the Commission established the Committee on Energy, which was supported by a

new subprogramme. The Committee on Energy held its first session in Bangkok from 17 to 19 January 2017.

197. In General Assembly resolution 70/248 A, the Assembly approved the establishment of new posts and the redeployment of existing posts for the newly created Energy Division in the Commission in order to provide substantive support for subprogramme 9, on energy, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

198. The strategic direction of the new subprogramme is derived from global and regional mandates, as given by the member States, including those contained in the Ministerial Declaration and Plan of Action, which were endorsed by the Commission in its resolution 70/9 as the outcomes of the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum.

199. Regional cooperation on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific, and in particular of Sustainable Development Goal 7, will be the major focus of work for the newly established subprogramme on energy.

200. In response to subparagraph 4 (b), the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum Implementation Support Mechanism was developed under a project funded by the Government of the Russian Federation. The project supported the implementation of the Plan of Action and the periodic review of progress made in its implementation. The Mechanism consists of three pillars: the Asia Pacific Energy Portal; policy dialogues; and analysis and reporting. The Mechanism is solution driven, with multilateral policy initiatives the expected outputs.

201. The Asia Pacific Energy Portal[18] is a web-based data and policy information platform designed to increase the accessibility and use of the Commission's regional energy information to support research, analysis and decision-making. The Portal collects and integrates data from the International Energy Agency, the World Bank, Sustainable Energy for All, the International Monetary Fund, the Energy Information Administration of the United States of America, the United Nations Comtrade database, Bloomberg, and other global and regional energy data providers that cover energy access, efficiency, renewables, trade flows, subsidies, investment and more. The Portal provides a user-friendly interactive data visualization platform and enables quick generation of meaningful charts from complex data. It also has a policy database that contains policies from 58 member States, which are sourced from hundreds of official websites. The Portal offers more than 2,500 full-text policy and programme documents, which are analysed to enable cross-sectional views of policy approaches from the region.

202. The dialogue pillar includes the annual sessions of the Policy Dialogue on Energy for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, which focuses on identifying solutions to key and emerging energy challenges in the region. The Policy Dialogue usually is attended by policymakers, resource persons and relevant stakeholders, including representatives of research institutions and private sector and civil society organizations. The Policy Dialogue is structured around the annual *Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific*, which contains an examination of trends and analyses of a few selected topics. The Portal and the *Regional Trends Report* facilitate

[18] www.asiapacificenergy.org.

deliberations during the Policy Dialogue to identify a few specific areas and concrete solutions to address common challenges through regional cooperation.

203. The analysis and reporting pillar includes the development of the annual *Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific*. In addition to its importance to the Policy Dialogues, it provides information on key challenges identified by member States. The *Regional Trends Report* supports the identification of potential policy solutions based on regional good practices. An edition of the *Regional Trends Report* was issued in 2015 and 2016. The 2016 *Regional Trends Report* provides an overview of the progress made with regard to the 15 areas identified in the Plan of Action.

204. In response to the request in subparagraph 4 (c), the secretariat initiated the necessary preparatory work for the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum at the ministerial level under the guidance of the Commission and the Committee on Energy and with the support of the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum Implementation Support Mechanism. The secretariat held consultations with the Government of Tonga and other member States regarding the hosting of the second Forum.

205. The Executive Secretary appointed the Director, ad interim, of the Energy Division as the focal point for the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum and the Chief of the Division of Administration as the focal point for host country agreements and logistical arrangements. More discussions and consultations on the preparation of the second Forum will be continuing with member States.